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STATE FOR EUR/WE AND EEB/ESC/TFS, NSC FOR E. FARR, TREASURY
FOR IA/OEE:WLINDQUIST

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2018

TAGS: EFIN PTER KTFN SP

SUBJECT: MINISTRY OF INTERIOR CHIEF OF STAFF SAYS BARAKAT
YARKAS EL PAIS TERRORISM FINANCE STORY IS NOT TRUE

REF: (A) MADRID 00522 (B) MADRID 00490

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Hugo Llorens, for reason 1.4 (d)

¶11. (S) Late on Friday, May 9, Ministry of Interior Chief of Staff Gregorio Martinez called the Charge about the April 28 El Pais story that suggested that Barakat Yarkas had financed terrorist cells from jail. The Charge had discussed the issue in person with Martinez the morning of May 9 (ref A). Martinez said that there was nothing to the El Pais story, and that it was totally wrong. The Chief of Staff said that Spanish law enforcement agencies were working on another case involving someone who was imprisoned, but that it had nothing to do with Barakat Yarkas. Martinez said that the National Intelligence Center's (CNI) director for counterterrorism was preparing a written confirmation of this information that would be delivered to the U.S. Embassy's Office of Regional Affairs (ORA).

¶12. (S) Comment: We look forward to receiving the written confirmation from the Interior Ministry to close the loop on this issue. We presume Martinez is correct, although even if correct, it would not detract from our message that Barakat Yarkas should be designated.

Llorens